

moral issue, an issue that smacks in the face of unfairness. We cannot afford to allow this type of proposal to come to American people who are trying their best to raise their families, to provide shelter for their children, and to provide an education for them. To move from a below-subsistence level to self-sufficiency, we must couch this as the moral issue it really is. For those who are spiritual-minded Members, for those who want to do the right thing, well, then fight with us to defeat this very egregious proposal that does not speak to the fundamental rights of this country.

Mr. OWENS. I am sure that both of my colleagues know well that phrase that they have heard repeated often, that in slavery everybody on the plantation had a job, because a job was then defined as work that the master wanted you to do. You did not get paid for it. For 232 years there was free labor. You did not get paid for it, but people had jobs. They were on the plantation and they had jobs. In order to satisfy those who again move out of racist motivations, when you say people should go to work and you create a situation through a bill you call welfare reform that pushes people off welfare and help from the government into situations where there are no jobs, no effort is being made to create those jobs. No effort is being made to create real jobs. So they want to push people into situations where they will work for something that is not a job. They will work for less than minimum wage. They will work under extraordinarily harsh conditions to do something that other workers were being paid to do before. So we are not only not creating jobs for welfare recipients, we are displacing workers who had jobs before.

As I said at the beginning, this is happening in no more evident way than it is happening in New York City. We have a large workfare program. The workfare program as it expands, we see the city employees, the municipal payroll, decreasing at the same rate as the workfare program is increasing, a definite correlation. You take away the jobs from the people who were being paid to do them before, with fringe benefits, with a retirement plan, all the things that go into a real job, you take that away and you put people to work who have nothing except to work off the cash value of their welfare grant, you get a lot of work done for very little. If you can institutionalize that and get it going full steam, you are back into a condition which is close to slavery because you are forcing people to work in a situation where it has no relevance to really what they need, you are not paying them, they are involuntary servitude. It is that bad. We are not exaggerating when we say that that is where you are going. If you rule out paying people what we call minimum wage and providing the benefits that we call a job, then you are creating something that is not a job. You are creating servitude and forcing people into that pattern of servitude.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. When the gentleman mentioned New York, I could not help but smile to myself and think of how fortunate the people of New York are that they have the gentleman as their advocate, that they have the gentleman working in their behalf. I want to thank the gentleman for organizing this evening and for giving us the opportunity to share it with the gentleman.

The last thing that I would want to say is the gentleman mentioned the whole business of slavery. I remember the words of the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass who suggested that if you would find the level of oppression that a people will accept, that is exactly what they will get. I do not believe that the people are going to accept this level of oppression. I certainly thank the gentleman for the opportunity.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. May I please add to those thanks, too. Because I thank the gentleman for taking the leadership on such a very important issue as this, early on, before we see this so-called proposal. But it is suspect to me that this is a proposal that is coming when I was told at the first of the year that we should not do anything about this welfare reform bill, to allow it to percolate for 1 year to see whether it really works. And now, before a half year is gone, here is a so-called proposal to revisit the minimum wage with the express consent to try to do something to harm those who are trying to move from welfare to work and to not give them a leg up.

I thank the gentleman. I agree with the gentleman from Illinois that New Yorkers are all the better because they have the gentleman to tout for them, to address their needs and to certainly bring very critical issues like this early on to the forefront. Again, I am ready for the fight.

Mr. OWENS. I thank my colleague from California and my colleague from Illinois for joining me.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, let me just say there is an effort to divide and conquer welfare recipients who are put over here and workers who are put over there. The workers of America must understand this is a threat to all of us. If you did not understand it before, I hope you understand it now, that whatever happens to one group of workers, welfare workers, is going to have an impact on the quality of life and standard of living of all workers. We must fight to protect all workers by stopping this effort to make welfare recipients work in conditions that are not conditions acceptable to other American workers.

□ 2215

COMMUNICATION FROM THE HONORABLE FRANK A. LOBIONDO, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIBBONS) laid before the House the follow-

ing communication from the Honorable FRANK A. LOBIONDO, Member of Congress:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 3, 1997.

Hon. NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to formally notify you pursuant to Rule L (50) of the Rules of the House that I have been served with a subpoena issued by the Superior Court of New Jersey, Cape May County.

After consultation with the General Counsel, I will make the determinations required by Rule L.

Sincerely,

FRANK A. LOBIONDO,
Member of Congress.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. FARR (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT), for today, on account of a family emergency.

Mrs. CLAYTON (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT), for today and Wednesday, June 4, on account of family illness.

Mr. PICKERING (at the request of Mr. ARMEY), for today and the balance of the week, on account of a death in the family.

Mr. BACHUS (at the request of Mr. ARMEY), for today, on account of attending his son's high school graduation.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. MCHALE) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. POMEROY, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. HILL) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. HULSHOF, for 5 minutes each day, on June 4 and 5.

Mr. PAPPAS, for 5 minutes, on June 4.

Mr. SHIMKUS, for 5 minutes, on June 4.

Mr. PITTS, for 5 minutes, on June 4.

Mr. JONES, for 5 minutes each day, on June 4 and 5.

Mr. KINGSTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. NORTHUP, for 5 minutes, on June 4.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan, for 5 minutes, today.

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

By unanimous consent, permission to revise and extend remarks was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. MCHALE) and to include extraneous matter:)